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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 04/07/08

INDEX:

- (1) For prevention of crimes by U.S. service members, base-hosting governors association calls for new body open to municipalities (Okinawa Times)
- (2) Coordination underway between Okinawa and central government to launch Futenma working group to discuss offshore plan (Ryukyu Shimpo)
- (3) Nakaima expresses displeasure with Maher's statement, saying, "It might create friction" (Ryukyu Shimpo)
- (4) Spot poll on Fukuda cabinet, political parties, road-related tax revenues (Yomiuri)
- (5) Poll on Fukuda cabinet, political parties, provisional gas tax, road projects, BOJ chief (Mainichi)
- (6) Poll on Fukuda cabinet, political parties, gasoline tax (Tokyo Shimbun)
- (7) Three months before G-8 Summit, Fukuda eager to boost administration (Yomiuri)
- (8) Close-up 2008: Freedom of expression challenged with movie theaters' refusal to show "Yasukuni" movie (Mainichi)
- (9) How will Japan promote refugees' settlement? (Asahi)

(10) U.S. voluntarily refrains from shipping only products from "first generation" cloned animals; Exports from "progeny" possible (Yomiuri)

ARTICLES:

(1) For prevention of crimes by U.S. service members, base-hosting governors association calls for new body open to municipalities

OKINAWA TIMES (Full)
April 5, 2008

Tokyo

Kanagawa Governor Shigefumi Matsuzawa, head of the association of the governors of 14 prefectures hosting U.S. bases, and others met on April 4 with Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs Osamu Uno. In the session, the group called for establishing in the Japan-U.S. Joint Committee a consultative body similar to a "regional special committee," in which municipalities can take part, with the aim of preventing the recurrence of crimes by U.S. service members. In response, Uno reportedly expressed an intention to consider it if the United States shows a positive stance.

Foreign Ministry: "We will consider it depending on the United States"

According to Matsuzawa, he proposed launching a new body when U.S. Ambassador to Japan J. Thomas Schieffer called on him at the prefectural government office on April 3. Matsuzawa quoted as the Ambassador as replying: "Given the situation, the U.S. government has an obligation to consider it positively."

TOKYO 00000944 002 OF 016

The governors' association has repeatedly urged the government to fundamentally revise the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement. In response, the government, dismissive of the request, indicated that it would deal with the matter by an improved operation of the SOFA.

The association regards the absence of a venue reflecting views of local governments in the SOFA-stipulated Japan-U.S. Joint Committee as a problem. The group underlined the need to establish a system to discuss matters based on the wishes of local residents.

Matsuzawa said: "If (the SOFA) cannot be revised, we would like to see a body established to reflect the voices of base-hosting municipalities. It is an appropriate proposal that can be achieved immediately by what the government calls an improved operation of (the SOFA)." Local trust cannot be obtained unless the governments of Japan and the United States address the matter."

The group also made the same request to Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Matsushige Ono on April 4 in the presence of director

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Hiromasa Yoshikawa of the Tokyo Okinawa office. The association said that it would also make a request to Foreign Minister Masahiko Koumura next week.

(2) Coordination underway between Okinawa and central government to launch Futenma working group to discuss offshore plan

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 1) (Full)
April 7, 2008

It was learned by April 6 that the Okinawa prefectural government has begun coordination with the central government on establishing a working group to discuss the planned Futenma Air Station relocation plan with an eye on moving the government's plan (to establish a V-shaped pair of runways) further offshore in the Henoko district in Nago. The taskforce is likely to be placed under the Futenma relocation consultative committee composed of the central government, Okinawa, Nago City, and other affected municipalities. Although they intend to confirm the plan at the next council meeting on April 9, there still remain uncertainties as to whether they can

reach an agreement on specifics by then.

The central government has just recently showed a positive stance to the request from the prefectural and Nago municipal governments to move the planned replacement facility further offshore. This is the first move toward concrete talks.

Talks are expected to move forward based on data obtained from an environmental impact assessment that began in March for the construction of the Futenma replacement facility.

In his campaign pledge, Governor Hirokazu Nakaima said that he could not support the government's current relocation plan. Demanding the Futenma replacement facility be built as far offshore as possible, the governor has repeatedly underlined the need for the central government to exhibit an attitude of some sort.

In connection with the council meeting planned for the 9th, Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba implied that coordination is underway for launching the working group to discuss the offshore relocation plan, saying, "Although it is not on the agenda, coordination will be launched on a variety of views."

TOKYO 00000944 003 OF 016

The government, which had repeatedly indicated that moving (the replacement facility) further offshore was not possible, has begun exhibiting a flexible stance, with Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura noting in February, "We would like to make maximum efforts to settle the matter at the earliest possible time with the offshore option in mind."

There are flexible views centering on the Prime Minister's Office (Kantei) about moving the planned runways further offshore, while the Foreign Ministry remains reluctant to do so. Views in the government have yet to be unified.

(3) Nakaima expresses displeasure with Maher's statement, saying, "It might create friction"

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 2) (Full)
April 5, 2008

Responding to moves to revise the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement, U.S. Consul General for Okinawa Kevin Maher said, "Some lawmakers and groups are trying to make political capital out of it." Okinawa Governor Hirokazu Nakaima in a regular press conference on April 4 criticized Maher's comment, saying, "He should look more closely at the current situation in Okinawa in expressing his views." Maher also referred to a proposal to apply Japan's alien registration system to U.S. military personnel living off base as "strange." Nakaima was unhappy about this comment, too, noting: "His opinion view is extremely odd. The statement might create friction between the United States and Okinawa. I feel that he is the kind of person who often makes baffling comments."

With regard to the expired provisional tax rates, the governor also expressed displeasure with the government's response, noting: "Why did the government fail to smoothly shift the cross-yearly tax rates at this time of year when prefectural assemblies have completed taking votes on (prefectural budgets)? Confusion had been expected all along, but the government failed to take appropriate measures. Many members expressed discontent at a meeting of the governors association."

He also voiced support for a second vote in the House of Representatives for reinstating the consumption tax rates, saying: "Although road construction projects would not be affected, because April and May are the period when preparations are made for construction, the overall prefectural budget would be affected significantly. I hope to see a second vote albeit belatedly. Turmoil must be minimized."

(4) Spot poll on Fukuda cabinet, political parties, road-related tax revenues

Questions & Answers
(Figures shown in percentage)

Q: Do you support the Fukuda cabinet?

Yes 28.0
No 57.7

TOKYO 00000944 004 OF 016

Other answers (O/A) 0.2
No answer (N/A) 14.2

Q: The ruling and opposition parties intended to reach an agreement by the end of March on the gasoline tax. In the end, however, they failed to do so. Do you think the ruling and opposition parties should have made a compromise with each other to reach an agreement by the end of March?

Yes 59.1
No 28.3
N/A 12.6

Q: Prime Minister Fukuda last week came up with the idea of incorporating road-related tax revenues into the state's general account budget from next fiscal year to use the road-related tax revenues for other purposes as well as for road construction and other road-related infrastructure projects. Do you appreciate this proposal?

Appreciate very much 25.5
Appreciate somewhat 27.1
Don't appreciate very much 17.6
Don't appreciate at all 18.7
N/A 11.1

Q: The Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) rejected the proposal. Do you appreciate the DPJ for this?

Appreciate very much 14.6
Appreciate somewhat 15.6
Don't appreciate very much 25.5
Don't appreciate at all 33.1
N/A 11.2

Q: Provisional extra taxation added to gasoline and other road-related taxes has now expired. Accordingly, gasoline prices are going down. However, gas stations are being thrown into confusion. Do you think it was good that gasoline is being priced down?

Yes 56.0
No 31.2
N/A 12.8

Q: The government and ruling parties are going to restore the rate of provisional extra taxation on gasoline in late April. Do you support this?

Yes 27.4
No 57.0
N/A 15.6

Q: Do you support the idea of freeing up the road-related tax revenues for general-purpose spending?

Yes 57.8
No 27.7
N/A 14.6

Q: Which political party do you support now? Pick only one.

TOKYO 00000944 005 OF 016

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) 27.3
Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) 22.9
New Komeito (NK) 2.8
Japanese Communist Party (JCP) 2.6
Social Democratic Party (SDP or Shaminto) 1.5
People's New Party (PNP or Kokumin Shinto) 0.3
New Party Nippon (NPN or Shinto Nippon) ---
Other political parties ---
None 38.9
N/A 3.7

Q: When would you like the House of Representatives to be dissolved for a general election? Pick only one from among those listed below.

As early as possible 24.6
After this July's G-8 summit 24.9
Within this year 21.7
Sometime during the current term up until September 2009 23.1
N/A 5.7

Q: If an election were to be held now for the House of Representatives, which political party would you like to vote for in your proportional representation bloc? Pick only one from among those listed below.

LDP 26.4
DPJ 28.9
NK 3.4
JCP 3.1
SDP 1.4
PNP 0.6
NPN ---
Other political parties ---
Undecided 29.8
N/A 6.4

Polling methodology: The survey was conducted April 1-2 on a computer-aided random digit dialing (RDD) basis. Among randomly generated telephone numbers, those actually for household use with one or more eligible voters totaled 1,725. Valid answers were obtained from 1,030 persons (60 PERCENT).

(5) Poll on Fukuda cabinet, political parties, provisional gas tax, road projects, BOJ chief

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
April 7, 2008

Questions & Answers
(T = total; P = previous; M = male; F = female)

Q: Do you support the Fukuda cabinet?

T P M F
Yes 24 (30) 23 26
No 57 (51) 64 49
Not interested 18 (19) 13 24

Q: (Only for those who answered "yes" to the above question) Why?

T P M F

TOKYO 00000944 006 OF 016

Because the prime minister is from the Liberal Democratic Party 38
(36) 37 39
Because something can be expected of the prime minister's leadership
10 (9) 12 7
Because there's something stable about the prime minister 23 (37) 17
27
Because something can be expected of the prime minister's policy
measures 24 (14) 28 21

Q: (Only for those who answered "no" to the above question) Why?

T P M F

Because the prime minister is from the Liberal Democratic Party 5
(7) 6 4
Because nothing can be expected of the prime minister's leadership
45 (40) 45 44
Because there's no fresh image about the prime minister 5 (8) 4 6
Because nothing can be expected of the prime minister's policy
measures 44 (44) 44 45

Q: Which political party do you support?

T P M F

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) 24 (26) 23 25
Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) 22 (23) 25 19
New Komeito (NK) 5 (4) 5 5
Japanese Communist Party (JCP) 3 (3) 3 3
Social Democratic Party (SDP or Shaminto) 1 (2) 2 1
People's New Party (PNP or Kokumin Shinto) 1 (0) 1 0
New Party Nippon (NPN or Shinto Nippon) 0 (0) 0 0
Other political parties 1 (1) 1 1
None 41 (39) 39 45

Q: The rate of provisional taxation on gasoline for road
construction and other road-related infrastructure projects expired
at the end of March. What do you think about this expiration?

T P M F

Welcome 53 57 49
It should have been avoided 43 41 44

Q: The government and ruling parties are going to take a second vote
in the House of Representatives late this month on a bill to
continue the provisional taxation on gasoline. Do you support this
course of action?

T P M F

Yes 32 33 30
No 64 65 63

Q: The government and ruling parties asked the DPJ for talks in
order to pass a bill at the end of March seeking to continue the
provisional taxation. However, the DPJ did not respond. Do you
appreciate this response?

T P M F

Yes 28 31 25
No 68 67 69

Q: Prime Minister Fukuda has proposed incorporating road-related tax
revenues into the state's general account budget from next fiscal

TOKYO 00000944 007 OF 016

year so the revenues can be used for other purposes in addition to
using the revenues for road construction and other road-related
infrastructure projects. What do you think about this proposal?

T P M F

Appreciate 30 31 30
Use the revenues for other purposes as well from the current fiscal
year 45 46 43
Use the revenues for road-related projects only 19 19 19

Q: The government's current 10-year road construction plan needs 10
trillion yen. Prime Minister Fukuda will shorten this midterm road
construction plan to five years and make a drastic review of the
plan. What do you think about this proposal?

T P M F

Appreciate 20 22 17
Insufficient 71 69 73
No need to review 4 6 2

Q: The government nominated two persons for the post of Bank of

Japan governor, and the DPJ-led opposition camp rejected both nominees. As a result, the post has been left unfilled. Which side do you think is more to blame?

T P M F
Government, ruling parties 49 48 49
DPJ 42 46 38

(Note) Figures shown in percentage, rounded off. "0" indicates that the figure was below 0.5 PERCENT. "No answer" omitted. Figures in parentheses denote the results of the last survey conducted Mar. 1-2.

Polling methodology: The survey was conducted Apr. 5-6 over the telephone across the nation on a computer-aided random digit sampling (RDS) basis. Answers were obtained from 1,061 persons.

(6) Poll on Fukuda cabinet, political parties, gasoline tax

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
April 6, 2008

Questions & Answers

(Figures shown in percentage. Parentheses denote the results of the last survey conducted Mar. 15-16.)

Q: Do you support the Fukuda cabinet?

Yes 26.6 (33.4)
No 59.6 (50.6)
Don't know (D/K) + no answer (N/A) 13.8 (16.0)

Q: (Only for those who answered "yes" to the previous question)
What's the primary reason for your approval of the Fukuda cabinet?
Pick only one from among those listed below.

The prime minister is trustworthy 20.7 (26.1)
Because it's a coalition cabinet of the Liberal Democratic Party and New Komeito 11.7 (8.9)

TOKYO 00000944 008 OF 016

The prime minister has leadership ability 1.7 (3.0)
Something can be expected of its economic policies 2.9 (3.4)
Something can be expected of its foreign policies 1.3 (6.6)
Something can be expected of its political reforms 1.7 (2.4)
Something can be expected of its tax reforms 2.1 (1.2)
Something can be expected of its administrative reforms 2.5 (2.7)
There's no other appropriate person (for prime minister) 52.0 (44.1)
Other answers (O/A) 0.9 (1.1)
D/K+N/A 2.5 (0.5)

Q: (Only for those who answered "no" to the first question) What's the primary reason for your disapproval of the Fukuda cabinet? Pick only one from among those listed below.

The prime minister is untrustworthy 8.9 (9.0)
Because it's a coalition cabinet of the Liberal Democratic Party and the New Komeito 5.2 (5.0)
The prime minister lacks leadership ability 32.5 (36.7)
Nothing can be expected of its economic policies 24.0 (17.8)
Nothing can be expected of its foreign policies 2.0 (1.7)
Nothing can be expected of its political reforms 7.9 (10.2)
Nothing can be expected of its tax reforms 6.5 (7.1)
Nothing can be expected of its administrative reforms 6.8 (6.9)
Don't like the prime minister's personal character 4.2 (4.3)
O/A 0.7 (0.4)
D/K+N/A 1.3 (0.9)

Q: Do you drive a car or a motorcycle to work or in your daily life?

Yes 72.1
No 27.9

Q: The provisional extra tax of 25 yen per liter added to the gasoline tax expired at the end of March because the ruling and opposition parties failed to reach an agreement. Do you think this provisional taxation on gasoline is needed?

Yes 32.1
No 52.2
D/K+N/A 15.7

Q: The government and ruling parties are going to take a second vote on a bill in the House of Representatives seeking to restore the provisional extra gasoline tax on the grounds that there will be tax revenue shortfalls. Do you support this?

Yes 26.2
No 64.4
D/K+N/A 9.4

Q: Prime Minister Fukuda has proposed incorporating gasoline and other-road related tax revenues into the state's general account so the revenues can be used for other purposes as well as for road-related infrastructure projects. Do you support this?

Yes 59.5
No 28.0
D/K+N/A 12.5

Q: On the issue of pension record-keeping flaws, the government and

TOKYO 00000944 009 OF 016

ruling parties say they kept their public pledge as they finished checking all pending pension records by the end of March. Meanwhile, the opposition parties are critically saying the government and ruling parties violated their public pledge because there is still a large volume of pending data. Do you think the government and ruling parties kept their public pledge?

Yes 19.1
No 63.9
D/K+N/A 17.0

Q: The DPJ is calling for Health, Labor and Welfare Minister Yoichi Masuzoe to resign over the pension fiasco, claiming that he has failed to fulfill his public pledge. Do you think he should resign?

Yes 11.2
No 83.8
D/K+N/A 5.0

Q: Would you like the current LDP-led coalition to remain in office, or would you otherwise like it to be replaced with a coalition centering on the Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto)?

LDP-led government 32.9 (38.5)
DPJ-led government 39.8 (37.3)
D/K+N/A 27.3 (24.2)

Q: The House of Representatives' current term lasts until September 12, 2009. When would you like the next election to take place for the House of Representatives?

During the first half of this year 16.7
After this July's G-8 summit, during the latter half of this year 37.0
During the first half of next year 9.8
Upon the current term's expiry in September next year 26.6
D/K+N/A 9.9

Q: Which political party do you support?

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) 27.6 (31.6)
Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) 25.7 (22.7)
New Komeito (NK) 2.5 (4.4)
Japanese Communist Party (JCP) 4.1 (1.1)
Social Democratic Party (SDP or Shaminto) 1.4 (2.2)
People's New Party (PNP or Kokumin Shinto) 0.3 (0.6)

New Party Nippon (NPN or Shinto Nippon) --- (1.0)
Other political parties, groups --- (---)
None 36.8 (35.3)
D/K+N/A 1.6 (1.1)

Polling methodology: The survey was conducted across the nation on Apr. 4-5 by Kyodo News Service on a computer-aided random digit dialing (RDD) basis. Among randomly generated telephone numbers, those actually for household use with one or more eligible voters totaled 1,481. Answers were obtained from 1,032 persons.

(7) Three months before G-8 Summit, Fukuda eager to boost administration

YOMIURI (Page 3) (Full)
April 6, 2008

TOKYO 00000944 010 OF 016

Only three months are left until the Lake Toya Summit is held in Hokkaido on July 7-9. This will be the fifth summit hosted by Japan. Prime Minister Fukuda visited for the first time the summit site in Toyako Town yesterday and held a meeting there of a panel tasked with discussing global warming, demonstrating his eagerness to host the summit. The domestic political situation remains unstable given that the opposition bloc has control of the House of Councillors. The prime minister is likely to face a bumpy road before reaching the summit.

? Spell of ordeals

The Windsor Hotel International - the venue for the upcoming G-8 Summit - overlooks Lake Toya. The areas near the lake were slightly dusted with snow yesterday.

Delivering a speech in the meeting held in the main banquet hall at the hotel yesterday, Fukuda said with a smile:

"This hotel commands a fine view. In July, there will be lots of green around here, so we will be able to engage in discussion while actually feeling the importance of protecting the environment. I believe the G-8 leaders will be satisfied with this environment."

Away from Nagata-cho (Japan's political center), Fukuda looked relaxed. But he is now faced with such difficult issues as the first vacancy of the Bank of Japan (BOJ) governorship in the postwar period and the expiration of the provisional gasoline and highway-related tax rates. In the latest survey by Yomiuri Shimbun, public support for the Fukuda cabinet dropped to 28 PERCENT, below the 30 PERCENT level for the first time.

The prime minister's first visit to the venue for the G-8 despite his tight schedule seems to be aimed at enhancing public interest in the summit by showing his eagerness and at playing up his presence on the diplomatic front.

Fukuda said: "I need to push ahead with diplomatic and domestic affairs, as well as the selection of a new BOJ governor and the upcoming G-8 Summit simultaneously." The current severe situation for him has made it impossible for Fukuda to devote himself to only diplomatic affairs. A senior government official grumbled: "In April, we need to be patient. Starting in May, we would like to launch an offensive."

? Irrigation

Fukuda places his high hopes on the upcoming G-8 Summit as one of a few "cards" available for him to buoy up his administration. The panel was set up in February as an "advisor" to the prime minister so that the issue of global warming, on which views are divided in the government, will be addressed under the lead of the Prime Minister's Office.

But on measures to cut greenhouse gas emissions, no progress has been made in unifying views on such issues as whether Japan should introduce an emissions trading system, which the European Union (EU)

has already introduced.

In the meeting yesterday, various views were presented. One participant insisted: "Japan should declare to the world its

TOKYO 00000944 011 OF 016

determination to reduce emissions by 80 PERCENT by 2050," and another asserted: "Japan should set prices for carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions."

The panel has decided to establish a new subcommittee to discuss the possibility of introducing the emissions trading system and an environment tax, and other issues, but the panel has not set the deadline for reaching a conclusion.

Fukuda wrapped up the meeting with this remark: "I felt time is pressing. I want you to come up with proposals that can obtain public understanding and can be presented before other participants countries in the Summit." After the meeting, Fukuda did not conceal his impatience before reporters, saying: "It is necessary for the panel to accelerate its activities. The panel should work considerably harder."

Tibet emerging as agenda item

The following four issues will be taken up as major themes in the upcoming Lake Toya Summit: (1) Climate change; (2) aid to Africa; (3) the global economy; and (4) regional situations and nuclear nonproliferation.

On the issue of climate change, Japan made in the G-8 Summit last year a proposal to halve global greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Will Japan be able to have this policy regarded as one agreed on by all the participant countries and to set forth effective proposals in discussion on a post-Kyoto framework in the coming summit? This question will be the greatest attention of focus. Attention will also be focused on how the Japanese-proposed method of collecting and aggregating data for different industries or sectors, the so-called sector-specific approach, will be treated.

Meanwhile, the slowing U.S. economy and rising oil prices will inevitably turn the focus of attention to the global economy.

Regarding regional situations, the issue of human rights has become a controversial issue around the world in connection with the recent Tibetan riots in China. There is the possibility that this issue will be high on the agenda, and Prime Minister Fukuda may find himself in a difficult situation for his stance of placing importance on relations with China.

Japan would like to take up the issue of Japanese nationals abducted by North Korea in a bid to maintain the pressure by the G-8 on North Korea. But a senior Foreign Ministry official said: "The leaders are becoming less interested in the abduction issue year after year." The prime minister's political skills will be tested over this issue.

(8) Close-up 2008: Freedom of expression challenged with movie theaters' refusal to show "Yasukuni" movie

MAINICHI (Page 3) (Abridged)
April 2, 2008

Tomomi Katsuta, Hideyuki Tanabe, Takenori Noguchi

Movie theaters refuse to screen the controversial documentary film "Yasukuni" dealing with Yasukuni Shrine located in Tokyo. Lying behind this move is the same reaction as seen in the case of Grand

TOKYO 00000944 012 OF 016

Prince Hotel New Takanawa's (in Tokyo's Minato Ward) refusal to accept a reservation made by the Japan Teachers' Union for a room to be used for a study meeting of teachers. Protests against the film by rightist groups were witnessed in the vicinities of movie houses

that have now decided not to show the film.

"Owing to unavoidable circumstances, we decided not to screen it. We have three silver screens in the theater, but we can't dispel the fear that we may not be able to secure a safe environment to show it. You might tell us to defend freedom of expression, but what we can do is limited," Akio Nakamura said, visibly perplexed. Nakamura is the director of the entertainment department of Humax Cinema that runs the movie theater, "Ginza Cinepathos," which decided not to screen "Yasukuni." When Nakamura decided to show the movie in last October, he did not expect the situation like now would arise. Yesterday after his decision made not to screen it, Nakamura was busy in selecting a substitute for "Yasukuni."

Meanwhile, the Directors Guild of Japan was astonished to hear that all cinemas that had been scheduled to show "Yasukuni" decided to cancel their plans to show it, immediately after the guild on March 31 issued a statement of protest against calls by Diet members for holding a preview of the film. Yoichi Sai, president of the Directors Guild of Japan, noted: "The freedom of expression of movies is defended only when the movies are shown at theaters. I fear that a mood may be created for film producers to regulate themselves."

The genesis of the move for theaters to cancel their plans to screen "Yasukuni" seems to have been laid when ruling Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) House of Representatives member Akemi Inada made a request to the Agency for Cultural Affairs (ACA) on Feb. 12. In it, Inada said, "I want to check the contents of the movie." Inada claimed that it was a problem that the Japan Arts Council, an independent administrative agency under the ACA's control granted a 7.5-million-yen subsidy to the production of the film. The ACA, after consulting with a distributor and advertisement company Argo Pictures, held a preview for lawmakers on the night of March 12. The preview was attended by 40 lawmakers from the LDP, the major opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), the LDP's junior coalition partner New Komeito, and the opposition Social Democratic Party of Japan (SDP).

At the time, four movie houses in Tokyo and one in Osaka were scheduled to show "Yasukuni," starting on April 12. But on March 18, Wald9 Cinema (in Tokyo's Shinjuku Ward) announced it had cancelled its plan to show it, citing business reasons. In the vicinities of other cinemas that were scheduled to screen the film, propaganda activities were seen and those cinemas had received protest calls. Right-wing organizations might have been stimulated by the moves by Inada and other lawmakers. One week later, after Wald9 decided not to screen the film, other cinemas likewise cancelled their plans to show it, for fear that the audience and neighbors might be annoyed (by protestors).

In the past, Juzo Itami, the filmmaker of "Minbo no Onna" (means the Gentle Art of Japanese Extortion, The Gangster's Moll and the Anti-Extortion Woman) released in 1992, was attacked by a gangster. The following year, when the film titled, "Daibyonin" (The Last Dance) directed likewise by Itami, was screened at a movie house, the movie screen was slashed by a rightist. In 1998, special screenings of "Don't Cry Nanking" at halls were cancelled in

TOKYO 00000944 013 OF 016

succession because of libelous and insulting propaganda activities by rightists. In 2000, House of Representatives member Koki Ishii brought up violent depictions in "Battle Royale" for debate in the Diet. However, it is very unusual that movie houses were forced to cancel their plans to screen the film.

LDP lawmaker: "The film is anti-Yasukuni"

"I don't think Ms. Inada's behavior led to the cancellation of theaters' plans to show the film, but it is inappropriate that the freedom of expression is affected by insulting and pressure." This general remark came from Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura at a news conference on April 1.

On March 13, the day after the preview for parliamentarians, the "Dento to Sozo no Kai" (Association of Traditions and Creation), a

group headed by Inada and consisting of conservatives in the LDP and the Parliamentary League on Peace and Yasukuni (chaired by House of Representatives member Hiroshi Imazu) held a joint study session by inviting officials from the ACA to the meeting

Both organizations are gatherings of lawmakers supportive of the prime minister's paying homage at Yasukuni Shrine. Inada after the preview said, "I got from the film the feeling that this was an ideological message that Yasukuni Shrine served as a device to incite the public to war." At the study group, she dealt mainly with the subsidy granted by the Japan Arts Council to the production of "Yasukuni."

Someone from among some 10 participants in the meeting shouted in anger: "It is anti-Yasukuni. It is likely to become a big issue." On March 31, Inada issued a statement, in which she said: "What we think it is questionable is whether it was appropriate to grant a subsidy to the production of that film. I don't want to see movie theaters cancel their plans to screen the film, for we want to make clear that our behavior is not put any restriction on the freedom of expression."

Meanwhile, the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) confirmed rightist groups' insulting propaganda activities against movie theaters that planned to screen the film more than once. But a senior MPD officer noted, "We have not noticed any major protests." According to the Police White Paper, arrest-related cases involving rightists in 2007 came to 1,752 involving 2,018 rightists. Compared with 1,691 arrest-related cases involving 2,217 rightists five years ago, the number of arrest-related cases increased, but the number of persons arrested declined slightly; in general, the figures appear to be leveling off.

A source familiar with the situation as to rightists explained: "Yasukuni Shrine is a special place for most rightists. That's why they tend to react so sensitively."

Responsibility does not lie with movie houses

Statement by film director Susumi Hani

"Yasukuni" was produced in a prudent manner. It is not a film that strongly projects criticism of Yasukuni Shrine. I think the Agency for Cultural Affairs (ACA) subsidized the film because it gave high marks to the film and it thought that it would be desirable for ordinary citizens to watch it. Of course, I want politicians to

TOKYO 00000944 014 OF 016

watch it, but it is wrong for them to complain about the ACA. And I think it is tantamount to breaking the social rule that opponents of the film express their opinions in ways to annoy movie houses and people living in their vicinities. It is a mistake to shift blame to movie theaters for the cancellation on their plans to screen it.

Director Li Ying of "Yasukuni": "I hope a healthy debate will arise among people who watched the film"

When asked by the Mainichi about the recent move by movie theaters in Japan, Li Ying (44), who directed "Yasukuni," said: "It is a dangerous situation that will take 'freedom of thinking' from citizens. I hope a healthy debate will arise among those who watched the film."

(9) How will Japan promote refugees' settlement?

ASAHI (Page 3) (Full)
April 2, 2008

Kazuto Tsukamoto, Miako Ichikawa

The policy of third country settlement for refugees has now been adopted extensively in Western countries. Specifically, the policy is for industrialized countries where the situation is stable to accept refugees who have escaped from warfare or tyranny in their home countries. The Japanese government, which so far had closed its

doors to refugees, began considering the adoption of the policy. Well, what is the difference between the policy and the previous system of granting asylum? What will be the challenge for Japan if it decides to adopt the policy?

Long-term support system for refugees' settlement a challenge for Japan

Last September, Japan set up a study group to discuss the policy of third country settlement of refugees. The panel consists of officials from 11 ministries and agencies, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, and the National Police Agency. The panel has begun studying the systems used for industrialized countries that already adopted that policy to select refugees who desire resettlement and how they accepted the refugees.

Japan's money contributions to the Office of the United Nations for High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are second only to those of the United States. But the number of foreigners to whom Japan gave refugee status in 2007 came to only 41, far below the levels of other countries. With growing international pressure on Japan to accept more refugees in proportion to its national strength, the government has become somewhat impatient. One senior MOJ official noted, "We are no longer in an age when checkbook diplomacy is appreciated."

Japan is therefore eyeing accepting the policy of third country settlement of refugees, for under it, it would be easy to select and choose refugees through interviews before their entry into the country. The same official noted, "It will be easy to keep a balance between international contribution and maintenance of security." Japan has not yet decided when to adopt that policy, but the UN and organizations supporting refugees are paying a close attention to

TOKYO 00000944 015 OF 016

developments in the study group's discussions, in anticipation of the adoption of the policy leading to the first step for Japan to open its doors to refugees.

Structural change in the Japanese society is also giving impetus to adopt such a policy since Japan now has to rely more on a foreign labor force, given the country's falling birthrate and aging population. Saburo Takizawa, Japan's representative to UNHCR, expressed hope: "Local areas in Japan are likely to want to accept refugees, given that the number of mountain and island villages where the elderly dominate their populations is on the rise."

There is a precedent for Japan accepting refugees. Specifically, Japan accepted some 11,000 Indonesian refugees from the 1970s through 2005. Nearly 40 PERCENT of those refugees came from refugee camps.

Of those resettled refugees, some had received a high education and became active in Japan. But there were many others who soon left Japan, emigrating to a European country or the United States. Those refugees received intensive Japanese language education, but they were unable to overcome the language barrier, so many were troubled about their inability to obtain satisfactory jobs. Hiroko Sakurai, chairperson of the nonprofit organization Association for Supporting Refugees' Settlement in Kanagawa located in Kanagawa Prefecture's Yamato City, where many Indonesian refugees were resettled, said: "It is essential for Japan to provide a long-term support system, such as Japanese language education."

(10) U.S. voluntarily refrains from shipping only products from "first generation" cloned animals; Exports from "progeny" possible

YOMIURI (Page 30) (Full)
April 4, 2008

It was learned yesterday that the United States has only refrained from shipping meat and other products from "first generation" somatic cell-cloned animals. Excluded from such self-constraints are meat from progeny and animal semen. The U.S. side gave this reply to the request of the Japanese government. If those products are placed

on the U.S. market, they might be imported to Japan. Although research results found that the products from somatic cell-cloned animals are safe for human consumption, because Japanese consumers are concerned about the safety of meat from cloned animals, there will likely be debate now about creating such rules as labeling such products.

The Food and Drug Administration in the United States issued in January its final evaluation that found meat and milk from such cloned animals as cows, pigs, and goats are as safe for human consumption as products from conventionally bred animals. But the Agricultural Department announced that it would continue to voluntarily refrain from selling them for the time being.

When the two announcements were made, the scope of U.S. voluntary restraint was unclear. But the Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry gave this reply to a question by a member of the Cabinet Office's Food Safety Commission in a meeting on April 3:

"The FDA's voluntary restriction on shipping was only until January. After that, the restriction has only been on products from first generation cloned animals. There is no clear information about how

TOKYO 00000944 016 OF 016

they will appear on the market."

According to a person familiar with this issue, the U.S. side notified Japan in February that the products subject to self-restraint included those from the original somatic cell-cloned animals and that progeny and semen were excluded. Reportedly the FDA urged (animal cloning companies) to voluntarily refrain from shipping the products from the original cloned animals and progeny until it declared the safety of them in January, but after January the Agricultural Department ordered to continue voluntarily refraining shipment of only the products from the first-generation cloned animals.

In the United States, therefore, meat and dairy products from the progeny of somatic cell-cloned animals can be sold. The Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry has taken a position that as long as there is no problem with the safety of those products, it is difficult to impose a ban on their imports. One ministry official also took this view:

"Because not much time has passed since the ban on the shipment of products from progeny was lifted, I don't think there are many products are on the market. It will take a lot of time before they reach Japan."

SCHIEFFER